

CDE *Instructor*

Bulletin 00-02

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CLARIFICATION OF TRAINING TERMS AND MEASUREMENTS

It has come to the attention of the California Department of Education that some instructors, administrators and school bus officers/coordinators are under the impression the parameters or criteria used in the elementary lessons outlined in the Department's "Instructor's Behind-the-Wheel Guide for California's Bus Driver's Training Course" commonly referred to as the Behind-the-Wheel Guide are absolute.

Example 1.

In the BTW Guide skill level two (2) page 2-9 straight line backing, the trainee is required to align the vehicle parallel and within 12 inches of the ground reference. They would then proceed to back the vehicle in a straight line for a distance (distance is at the discretion of the instructor) with the vehicle remaining parallel and within 12 inches of the ground reference. The parameters for this exercise are for training purposes only. Nowhere within the California *Vehicle Code* does it require or prohibit a bus from completing this maneuver using measured distances other than those stated in the BTW Guide. *Vehicle Code* section 22106 simply states,

No person shall start a vehicle stopped, standing, or parked on a highway, **nor shall any person back a vehicle on a highway until such movement can be made with reasonable safety.**

Example 2.

In the BTW Guide Skills Level Two page 2-26 Precision Turning Procedures, Vehicle Alignment, the trainee is being taught to turn the vehicle safely, "to reduce the risk of contact with either fixed or movable problem objects." The BTW Guide states, "the following vehicle alignment is recommended: At the beginning of the turning zone, the vehicle should be aligned parallel to the roadway, 18 to 36 inches away from any problem object." Again, the parameters for this exercise are for training purposes only. Nowhere in the California *Vehicle Code* does it require or prohibit a bus from starting this maneuver at these recommended measured distances. *Vehicle Code* section 22100 simply states,

Except as provided in Section 22100.5 or 22101, the driver of any vehicle intending to turn upon a highway shall do so as follows:

(a) Right Turns. Both the approach for a right-hand turn and a right-hand turn shall be made **as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway** except...

Individuals using the Department's Behind-the-Wheel Guide should be aware that the elementary lessons contained in Skills Level Two are for instructing trainees, and that the parameters and criteria have been established by the Department to determine the trainee's readiness to advance to subsequent Skills Levels. Some of the parameters and criteria used in these lessons are often not practical, nor fairly portray a driver's skill or ability, in real world driving situations. It is the Department's position that certain specific training parameters and criteria contained in the Behind-the-Wheel Guide, most commonly units of measurements, should not be used to test proficiency of bus drivers or for the purposes of accident investigation and the determination of fault.

Any questions should be referred to the California Department of Education's Office of School Transportation at (916) 375-7100.